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Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

Combined initial, second and third periodic reports of States parties

Angola*

* The present document is being submitted without formal editing.

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CHAPTER I

1. OVERVIEW

The Republic of Angola is situated on the southwestern coast of Africa. It has an area of 1,246,700 sq. km. (approximately 481,350 sq. miles), and an population estimated at 11 million. About 45% of its people are under the age of 15; half are younger than 20, and only 5% are age 60 or older.

About 51% of Angola's population is female; the gender ratio is 97 men for every 100 women.

Since Angola became independent, there have been a number of setbacks in the socioeconomic situation, and the economy became much worse after 1992, when the civil war intensified. There has also been an intense migration into urban centers. Some of the problems:

- A high rate of poor nutrition and serious malnutrition because of the disorganized and forced migration of the population, the quality of the diet, and the environmental and socioeconomic conditions under which they live;

- Access to basic education is very limited; only one out of five children of school age has access to a school;

- Children spending time in or living in the street, in the leading urban centers, and a high number of at-risk children (delinquency, drugs, etc.)

- Countless single-parent families, and family disintegration in general have become the realities in Angola, owing primarily to the war that has swept the country for the past 30 years.

Of the 174 countries listed in the United Nations human development index, Angola ranks 165th. Its people live in abject poverty, although Angola's income classified as "low average."

Although the available data are not reliable, all indications are that in recent years the health of the population has deteriorated to such an extent that maternal mortality rates (1,200 to 1,500 per hundred thousand live births), of mortality among children that have not reached their first birthday (150 per thousand live births), and among children under the age of 5 (220 per thousand) are the highest in all of Africa.

The rate of regular elementary school attendance, which was 46% in 1990/91, must be much lower now.

It is also estimated that, owing principally to the wartime conditions, Angola has 1.3 million displaced persons, 80% of whom are women and children. In addition, more than 100,000 people have been disabled by the war and will require special assistance programs in order to reintegrate themselves into society.

Studies also show an increase in households headed by women. The indices run about 25% in Luanda (1991) and 40 % in rural areas (1992).

The key factors that contribute to these unfavorable socioeconomic conditions are the effects of the war, both direct and indirect, such as damage to the environment, the low educational level of the population, the destruction of society's infrastructures--including the widespread disappearance of water and sewers systems--and deterioration of the schools, the decline in the quality of care given, and the negative impact of economic policies.

Also because of the prolonged war, the emphasis on interventions has been restricted to emergency assistance and there is still a great deal of uncertainty and lack of confidence about future peace, factors that have contributed to the near-paralysis of the public sector.

Despite these conditions, new initiatives are emerging and even proliferating. These are the result of the efforts of professionals in the various sectors, the public in general, and even the Government, and enable us to identify a potential that needs to be reinforced as we search for solutions leading to sustainable human development.

Level of Implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women

The Republic of Angola has ratified and endorsed several international legal instruments intended to implement of the Convention. Among these are:

1. United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. Adherence was ratified by the first legislature at the Seventh Regular Session of the former People's Assembly, held July 25-27, 1984, by Resolution No. 15/84, which was published in Issue 222, 1st series, of the *Official Gazette*.
2. The United Nations Convention on the Political Rights of Women, December 20, 1952. The letter of accession was ratified by the first legislature at the Second Regular Session of the former People's Assembly, held July 27, 1985, by Resolution No. 4/85, published in Issue 60, 1st series, of the *Official Gazette*.
3. (ILO) Convention No. 100 and Recommendation No. 90 on Equal Remuneration for work of equal value, June 29, 1951.
4. The African Charter on the Rights of Man and of Peoples, June 28, 1981.
5. Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, July 28, 1951.

2. Activities Prior to Beijing

In order to prepare for the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing in September 1995, a preparatory committee was formed at the initiative of the Prime Minister. This committee was composed of representatives from several ministries, NGOs, the women's wings of political parties, churches, and others.

Two national conferences were held to study and debate the report that Angola would present at the Conference. In addition, lectures, meetings, and round tables were held to discuss subjects in preparation for the upcoming Conference.

The Angolan Government delegation numbered 25: 20 women and 5 men.

3. Events in Preparation for the Beijing Conference

Activities After Beijing

I At the local/national level

(a) Government

1. Development of the National Strategy for the Advancement of Women, by the year 2000.
2. Publication of the African Platform of Action and the World Platform of Action.
3. Seminar on Women and Community Development (financed by UNIFEM - the United Nations Development Plan for Women).
4. Implementation of three projects financed by the Embassy of the Kingdom of Sweden in Angola:
   - studies on violence perpetrated against Angolan women
   - statistics on gender
   - support for the project to create legal advice centers.
5. Seminar on gender issues in the provinces. This project was launched in 1995 and covers six provinces:

1995 Cabinda
Kuanza Sul
Benguela
Huíla

1996 Bengo
Lunda Sul
Huambo
Bié
Kunene

1997 Malange
Kuanza Norte
Huíge
Zaíre
Moxico
Kuando Kubango

6. Development of a Program of Action on the basis of the national strategy for 1997/98
7. Development of projects:
   - Projects to create Community Development Centers in the provinces
   - Project to train women as facilitators of development, including rural development
   - Program to support associations of rural women and other income-generating initiatives
   - National Microcredit Program
8. Assistance and monitoring visits to the provinces, and identification of the local provinces [sic].
9. Assignment of a technical expert to the two-month course given by Prege/World Bank in project development and evaluation.
10. Formation of a network of women in decision-making positions.
11. National seminar on violence against women in Angola.
12. Seminar on networking in favor of women and families.
13. Implementation of the project on the Advancement of Women, financed by the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA), with support from UNIFEM.
14. Seminar to present the project on "Microcredit," planned for Luanda, February 1998.

(b) Non-Governmental Organizations

1. National Seminar for the Promotion of Female Entrepreneurship
   - Support for the creation of a committee to set up a future Angolan Federation of Women in Business
3. Support for the creation of a Roots of Peace Association.
4. Support for the Fourth Meeting of Women Jurists in Lusophone Countries.
5. Working meetings with organizations and associations of women journalists and the Angolan Association for Family Welfare, the Angolan Association of Women Jurists, and others.

II. At the Regional Level

1. Participation in the 17th meeting of the African Regional Coordinating Committee on the Integration of Women in Development (ARCC) (April 1996)
2. Forum on leadership by women on issues of peace (November 1996).
3. Participation in the 18th Meeting of the African Regional Committee of Women Legislators and Ministers (Tanzania, October 1996)
4. Participation in the 18th Meeting of the African Regional Coordinating Committee for Integration of Women in Development (Addis Ababa, April 1997)
5. Conference on Women Legislators (Namibia, March 1997)
6. Conference on Gender Equality (Swaziland, April 1997)
7. Participation in the First Ladies' Summit on Peace (Abidjan, May 1997)
8. Participation in the General Assembly on the Formation of the Association of Women Secretaries and Executives in Africa (Côte D'Ivoire, May 1997)
9. Participation in the Seventh Congress of the Pan-African Women's Organization (PAWO) (Zimbabwe, July 1997)

III. At the International Level

1. Participation in the United Nations General Assembly as part of the group of experts (New York, October 1996)
2. International Conference on Family Policies and Plans of Action (Canada, December 1996)
3. Participation at the 41st Session of the Committee on the Status of Women (New York, March 1997)
4. Seminar on Women in Business - The Economic Responsibility of Women (Thailand, October 1997)
5. International Conference on Adult Education (Germany, June 1997)
6. Participation on the Third Committee of the United Nations General Assembly (New York, October and November 1997)
7. Attendance at the course entitled Gender, Women, and Development (The Netherlands, November 1997)
8. Participation in the General Assembly of the Pan-African Women's Organization (Zimbabwe, July 1997)

CHAPTER II

2. Measures Intended to Eliminate Sexual Discrimination

Article 18 of the Constitution of Angola recognizes the principle of equality and non-discrimination against citizens, and equality between the sexes is one of the ramifications of this principle.

Section 1 of that article of the Constitution states that "all citizens are equal before the Law and enjoy the same rights and are subject to the same duties, without distinction as to color, race, ethnic background, sex, place of birth, religion, ideology, level of education, or economic or social condition. And it adds, in Section 2, that "the law severely punishes all acts that seek to impair social harmony or create distinctions or privileges on the basis of those factors."

The principle of equality and non-discrimination finds support elsewhere in the Constitution, for example, in Article 28(1), which provides for active participation in public life. It reads "All citizens above the age of 18 years, except those legally deprived of their political and civil rights, have the right and the duty to participate actively in public life by voting and being elected to any organ of the State, and to serve their terms of office with full devotion to the Angolan Nation."

With regard to the right to security in employment, education, and one's professional career, the Constitution states, in Article 28(2): "No citizen may be prejudiced in his employment, education, his placement, his professional career or in the social benefits to which he is entitled, due to his holding of political office or the exercise of political rights."

Article 29 recognizes that "Man and Woman are equal within the bosom of the family, enjoying the same rights and responsible for the same duties."

Article 43 recognizes the right of recourse to the courts: "All citizens have the right to contest or appeal to the courts regarding all acts that violate their rights as established in this Constitutional Law and in other legislation."

Under Article 46, all citizens have a right, and the duty, to work and they are entitled to freely choose and practice their professions, but must satisfy requirements established by law (Article 46(3)).

As the protection of mothers, the elderly and the disabled; and with respect to medical care, health and access to schooling, Article 47 provides that: "The State takes such measures as may be necessary to assure citizens the right to assistance during childhood, maternity, disability, old age, and in any situation of inability to work," and "the State promotes access by all citizens to schooling, culture, and recreation..."

Actions to make a reality of these standards can be found throughout Angola's legislation and are expressed in the various branches of Angolan law. For example, the Nationality Law (Law No. 13 of May 11, 1991) provides that nationality by origin is awarded to children who have an Angolan mother or father, who were born in Angola, or to the children of an Angolan mother or father born abroad (Article 9), and that nationality by acquisition results from adoption, marriage, naturalization, or a declaration of will (Articles 10, 11, and 12). That same law, in Article 15, provides that marriage to a foreigner does not constitute a reason for loss of citizenship.

(a) Family relationships

- Relations between spouses

Family relationships in Angola are governed by the Family Code, enacted by Law 1 of February 20, 1988.

The following statements of the principle of equality between the sexes appear in this Code. Article 3 provides that man and wife are equal within the bosom of the family, enjoying the same rights and subject to the same duties. Both the State and the family must ensure equality and reciprocity by promoting the right to education, work, relaxation, and social security.

As a consequence of the principle laid down in Article 3, Article 44 provides that both spouses are bound to the duties of fidelity, cohabitation, and mutual assistance and must work together in handling the responsibilities of family life and share the domestic tasks (Article 45). Furthermore, they are given the right to pursue the occupation or activity of their choice (Article 47).

Decisions on vital family issues must also be made by both spouses, and either of them can represent the family vis à vis third parties (Articles 47 and 48). An interesting aspect along the lines of recognition of the principle of equality in family relationships, however, is that either spouse may opt, during the marriage ceremony, to assume the surname of the other, or to choose a common name based on their two surnames.

Since the formation of a family creates not only personal relationships, but also involves property, the Family Code took care to establish equality between the spouses with respect to the administration and disposition of assets. In Articles 54 ff., it is stated that each spouse may administer his or her own property, may administer the property of the other spouse, and that either of the spouses may exercise everyday administration of the couple's common property. However, said spouse may be held liable for actions taken, in that administration, to the detriment of the other spouse or the couple.

With respect to the disposal of property, the Law provides that community property may be disposed of only with the agreement of both spouses, unless at the time of their marriage they opted for the separate property regime, in contrast to common ownership of acquired property.

But even if a couple has chosen the separate property regime, the law imposes certain restrictions and requires the consent of the other spouse for certain transactions, such as renting out the house in which the family lives, or property belonging to one spouse when the items are used in the home, or property owned by one spouse that is used by the other in his or her work.

The Law considers as debts owed by both spouses those assumed by one or both of the spouses to meet family responsibilities or for the mutual benefit of the couple (Article 61). The same applies to debts contracted by one spouse with the consent of the other spouse, or by both spouses. Debts assumed by one of the spouses without the consent of the other, and those resulting from circumstances attributable to only one of them (fines, indemnification, etc.) (Article 62 (a) and (b)) are the responsibility of the spouse who incurred the obligation.

If the marriage is dissolved by death, the surviving spouse, regardless of sex, is assured the right to continued enjoyment of the benefits resulting from the marriage (Article 75 (1)), such as the right to continue to use the surname adopted at the time of marriage (Article 36(3)), the right to half the community property (Article 75(2)), and the right to rent out the family home (Article 75(3)).

If the marriage is dissolved by divorce, the spouses forfeit the right to use the surname adopted at the time of the marriage (Article 36(2)). They lose the benefits received by virtue of the marriage (Article 80(c)). One of them forfeits the right to exercise parental authority over the minor children; this is then exercised by only one of the spouses, determined either by mutual agreement or by the courts (Article 148).

The right to rent out the family home may be awarded to one of the spouses—again, determined by either by mutual agreement or by the courts (Article 110).

As for emotional bonds, the violation of conjugal duties in general—especially physical and psychological abuse—may constitute serious grounds for divorce (Article 97).

No petition for divorce can be filed against a pregnant woman, not even until a year has elapsed since delivery, unless the petitioner challenges the paternity of the child or the woman consents to the petition for divorce. (Article 103).

In Angola, marriage and *de facto* unions are the two ways in which family relationships are established. A *de facto* union is understood to be a situation in which a woman and a man freely choose to live together.

The effects of a *de facto* union can be held, by recognition, as equivalent to marriage, provided the legal requirements are satisfied.

Under Articles 112 ff., there are three situations that would lead to the recognition of a *de facto* union: its rupture, a mutual decision to have it recognized, or death. Recognition requires living together for more than three years, capacity to marry, and exclusivity of the union (one man and one woman who are faithful to each other).

The spouses derive the following from the acceptance of this institution in Angolan law: in the event of recognition upon rupture or death, they gain attribution of the right to the shared residence, apportionment of community property, and illicit enrichment [sic] (Article 113).

A suit to obtain recognition of a *de facto* union must be filed within two years of its rupture, or of the death of one of the spouses.

The essential element in the establishment of a family is the free choice of the spouse, who must be allowed to freely choose marriage or a *de facto* union. This right is protected in Articles 20 and 112 of the Family Code.

The code recognizes the following parental rights and obligations toward their children: A minor is permitted to establish a family through marriage upon reaching the age of 16 (in the case of a male) or 15 (in the case of a female), if careful consideration of the circumstances indicates that marriage is the best way to protect the interests of the minors.

(b) Relations between parents and children

Under Article 1 of the Family Code, the family is given responsibilities with respect to all of its members.

Article 2 provides that, in general, the family is responsible for the education and upbringing of all its members. This must be done in a spirit of love, respect for cultural values, and opposition to outmoded conservative concepts; it must also counter exploitation and oppression, and foster loyalty to the fatherland.

It is further provided that within this context, the family shall contribute to the harmonious and balanced development of its members so that each one may fully realize his or her individual personality and potential, in the interests of society as a whole

Therefore, the family is charged with the education and harmonious development of any minor, while that minor is a member of the family.

Reinforcing this concept, Article 4 states that children deserve to occupy a special place within the bosom of the family and that the family, in cooperation with the State and social organizations, must assure them of the fullest protection and equality so that they may achieve a well-rounded physical, psychological, and intellectual development. Moreover, it is hoped that during the process of the educational effort, the bonds between the family and society will be strengthened.

The Code also provides that minors are to be taught the principle of equality of rights and duties and respect for each individual's personality. It also provides that special protection is to be given to children, in a spirit of cooperation and helpfulness.

It can readily be appreciated from the foregoing that the Law imposes on families an obligation to educate their minor children, and gives the family primary responsibility for their education. And because the law requires that children be taught the principle of equality of rights, it makes no distinction between children born within or outside of the marriage or of any other kind of relationship held equivalent thereto (*de facto* unions).

The authority exercised by the family over its minor members is parental authority, which is exercised by both parents when they live together, or only by one (the one who has custody and responsibility for the minor) in the event of separation.

The primary purpose of *patria potestas* is to afford the child moral education and training and prepare him or her to pursue an occupation and thus become a worthwhile and socially useful citizen (Article 130).

In this context, the parents, guardians (or whomever has custody) has a duty to cooperate with the schools and the institutions that assist children and youth, as well as to provide care, protection, and assistance and to set a good example.

When parental authority is exercised separately, the parent who is not living with the child does not forfeit the right to associate with the child, and he/she maintains his/her obligations, particularly to provide financial support in the broadest sense of the term.

Protection can also be provided by one of the spouses to children of the other spouse.

Arrangements to exercise parental authority can be made privately or through the courts; in the former case, ratification by the Family Court is required.

When parental authority is exercised separately, the parents are restricted in their ability to dispose of property belonging to the minor, to refuse to accept legacies, or to undertake obligations that might bind the child after he/she comes of age. This limitation can only be lifted by the courts (Articles 140, 141).

However, there are factors that could inhibit the exercise of parental authority by one or both of the parents (Articles 152-155) but this circumstance would not annul the obligation to provide child support (Article 157).

As was mentioned above, the moral upbringing and vocational training of a child to be a worthwhile and socially useful citizen is assured by the exercise of parental authority. That is why care was taken, in drafting the Family Code, to create ways to replace parents when, for a variety of reasons, the child no longer lives with his/her parents. And so there are two legal mechanisms to accomplish this: guardianship, and adoption. Both are intended to give the child social, moral, and emotional protection.

(c) Guardianship

Guardianship, as regulated in Articles 222-246 of the Family Code, is intended not only to accomplish the purposes mentioned earlier, but to protect the minor's personal and property interests.

Subject to mandatory guardianship are minors whose parents are unknown, absent, unable to exercise parental authority, or who have not in fact exercised it for more than a year. Also subject to mandatory guardianship are adopted children whose adoption has been revoked. Appointment of a guardian is the task of the Court. The Family Code provides, however, that parents may name a guardian to serve in the event of their deaths, but that designation is valid only if ratified by a court.

Guardianship cannot be established without a hearing by the Family Council, and a minor who has attained the age of 10 must also be consulted (Article 232).

Guardianship designation is not recognized if the proposed guardian does not satisfy the following requirements:

- Has reached the age of majority
- Is in possession of his/her civil and political rights
- Demonstrates, through moral, occupational, and social behavior that he/she is able to educate the ward and defend his/her interests
- Is financially able to support the ward when necessary
- Has no direct or indirect interests that would conflict with those of the ward.

In administering the property of his/her ward, a guardian needs authorization from the Court to dispose of real estate or durable personal property, refuse to accept legacies, or undertake obligations of any type, or file lawsuits (Article 238, taken together with Article 141) and actions taken without court authorization can be annulled (Article 239).

Exercise of guardianship is monitored by the Family Council, which is to be established by the Court (Article 241). It is overseen by that council, which has authority to review the financial accounts submitted by the guardian.

The guardianship may be terminated when the ward comes of age. It may also be ended by removal or resignation of the guardian, or cessation of the circumstances that led to its establishment. If the guardianship is ended by removal or resignation, the court appoints a new guardian. A guardian can be removed by court order.

(d) Adoption

Adoption is not only a way to annul the exercise of paternal authority, it is also a source of new family ties, inasmuch as the adoptee is bound to the natural offspring of the adopting person in every sense of the word. Because the Family Code makes provisions for the right to a name, the adoptee assumes the name of his adopting parent(s). In that case, the ties to the blood relatives of the birth mother or father who was replaced by adoption are also extinguished; all that remains is the ban against intermarriage.

Spouses who are married or living in a *de facto* union that is eligible for recognition can adopt. Also, the male or female spouse in a *de facto* union may adopt a child of the other spouse, and unmarried persons may also adopt.

This means that children of a widow/widower can be adopted by the second husband or wife, thereby extinguishing the ties between the minor child and the relatives from the side of the family that left him an orphan, or semi-orphan. Obviously, this creates certain difficulties.

The following are the requirements to be met by someone who wishes to adopt:

1. Must have reached his/her 25th birthday and be in full possession of his/her civil rights;
2. Must be of good moral repute and social behavior, especially in terms of family relationships;
3. Must be financially able to support and educate the adoptee;
4. Must be at least 16 years older than the proposed adoptee;
5. Must be in good physical and mental health;
6. If a foreigner, must have authorization from the National Assembly.

And so we have shown here how, in general terms, children are being protected socially, morally, and emotionally when placed outside their birth family. However, the cases of integration of minors are, in practice, limited to these two aspects we have mentioned, guardianship and adoption.

The social, moral, and emotional protection of minor children can be assured even outside of any family situation. This is what happens in welfare and educational establishments. In these cases, there are no problems in figuring out who is responsible for the minor child, since the law makes it clear, in Article 234, that the director of the establishment serves as guardian.

Questions arise about children who, for various reasons, end up in other families without a declaration of surrender of the child ever having been made. Then, the young person is completely unprotected in the eyes of the law.

For lack of a better term, these situations will be called "*de facto* situations that lack legal protection."

(e) De facto situations lacking legal protection

The war in Angola has shattered many families, there are large numbers of displaced persons, and so the extent of poverty has increased.

Traditional African altruism and the custom of using cheap labor has led, and still leads, children from broken families (and other children, too,) to be taken in by other families, especially in urban areas.

In these cases, rarely do the "protectors" bother to correct the child's legal status. The consequences of such a situation are all the more serious, the lower the moral standing of the family that accepted the child.

Children in these situations have complained of physical and emotional abuse, overwork, and sexual abuse at the hands of members of the host family, or persons associated with it.

This is an extremely delicate situation, because it is always hard to be certain as to what kind of relationship is being established between the minor child and his/her host family, and what kind of legal bonds there may be.

The absence of government agencies that can effectively monitor this situation makes it less likely that the child's rights will be respected, and often he/she runs away in order to put an end to the situation.

Furthermore, if the victim is a minor under Angolan law, he/she is not competent to exercise any rights or to represent himself/herself in court. He or she will need a legal representative, and this may well be the very person who is violating the minor child's rights.

From the foregoing, it is clear that mechanisms need to be created that will allow a minor child to file suit himself in court whenever his rights are violated. This could ensure that offenders are punished, and would also guarantee better

assessment of the degree, number, and type of violations existing in this field and in others where a minor finds it impossible to take action on his own to set in motion a court proceeding that would enforce his rights.

It seems certain that once the war is over and the quality of life for Angola's citizens improves substantially, this vital element of a society can be addressed and society will be able to play the role naturally and legally assigned to it.

It is important that existing institutions be provided with the physical and human resources to insure control and effective compliance with the law.

Although the Constitution states that the law punishes all acts of discrimination, this programmatic standard is concretely present in other legal measures, to some extent for practical purposes. Acts of discrimination against women here in Angola, according to a study, usually occur in the shadows, but there are some overt examples. Among the most flagrant are incidents of discrimination in access to positions of responsibility.

The absence of specific legislation penalizing sex discrimination (or any other kind of discrimination) and the fact that they assume veiled forms, makes them difficult to unmask. The "macho" mentality that continues to prevail in this world, especially in the developing nations, is another obstacle in the path of making a reality of equality between the sexes.

Here are some practical steps that need to be taken in order to fully implement the principle of equality between the sexes:

- Creation of women's bureaus within police precincts
- Mandatory reporting, by the medical profession, of rapes and physical assaults
- Campaigns to publicize the content of existing laws.

CHAPTER III

3. General Protection of Fundamental Rights and Individual Freedom on an Equal Basis Between Men and Women

Title II of the Angolan Constitution requires protection of fundamental rights and recognizes the principle of non-discrimination on the basis of sex, ethnic background, color, political or religious choice, level of education, and economic condition.

It also states that "the law punishes all acts that seek to impair social harmony or create distinctions or privileges on the basis of those factors." From the theoretical standpoint, there exists protection for fundamental human rights, but in practice, they are continually being violated, consciously or unconsciously.

The institutions themselves are often the first to violate these rights, because what they think of as repression is actually violation. Every day we witness "little" violations of basic rights and individual freedom by public institutions and services.

Unfortunately, there is no agency that can control this type of violation, or any office that explains and educates the public on these fundamental rights, the need to respect them and--what is most serious--where one should go to appeal when these rights are disrespected or violated, since, most of the time, the agency that should ensure respect for and compliance with the law does not do so.

Citizens are often arrested in disregard of the principle of "innocent until proven guilty." The practice is to arrest first, ask questions later.

It is when these rights are violated in private that it becomes more difficult, first to verify that a violation took place, and second to assert the right to protection.

The culture of violence is an everyday fact of life for our citizens, since most of them are ignorant of their rights and how to exercise them.

If human rights are to be protected, we must:

- First, educate the public (tell them about rights and how to protect them)
- Second, see that legislation or other measures are adopted to ensure protection and respect for fundamental rights
- Third, institute judicial relief in the area of human rights and women's rights, and ensure that the courts and other government institutions effectively safeguard those rights
- Fourth, institute appropriate measures to eliminate all forms of violence and discrimination perpetrated against human beings.

3.1 Violence Against Women

Violence against women, whether within the family circle or in public, is a serious matter that has attracted special attention from both women's organizations and the Ministry of Family Affairs and Advancement of Women. Both are attempting to find ways to reduce the degree of violence, and to educate the public and society's institutions, and create mechanisms to protect women who are the victims of violence.

From the legal standpoint, there is nothing on the books that punishes acts committed specifically against women. The legislation is inconsistent with the principle of equality among citizens.

There are no laws that specifically condemn sexual crimes against women. Where there are abuses against women, either within the family, on the job, or in social relationships, the victim encounters innumerable obstacles because such police forces as exist have not been sensitized to handled these cases and, most of the time, treat women badly, saying that "if something happened, it's her fault because she provoked it," or even that "these are domestic problems and the police have more important matters to solve."

- This attitude is born of a patriarchal culture where women are relegated to second place, where their only purpose is to bear children.
- There is no understanding of, or respect for, human rights.

3.1.1 Domestic Violence

Domestic violence takes the form of physical and mental abuse, rapes, sexual abuse of the woman or young person, expulsion of the woman and children from the family home, or the sale of the home without the woman's consent.
Domestic crimes are rarely punished, and when complaints are filed and reach the courts, a great deal of leniency is always shown in sentencing the men. The traditional view that the woman is the guilty party, or provoked the assault and that the husband has the right to punish her means that many offenses are never punished.

Family members put a lot of pressure on women to discourage her from filing a complaint, or to get her to withdraw it if she filed one.

3.1.2 Sexual Violence

There are many cases of sexual abuse of mature women, adolescents, and even small children. But, unfortunately, because of the scant attention paid by the police and courts, it is impossible to know how many of these cases there are. Usually, the victims and their families keep silent about this problem.

In the street, in the marketplaces, and at school we witness physical violence against women, adolescents, and children, but both the authorities and the average citizen are insensitive to it, and rarely do the police take steps to stop or prevent it. Quite often, the violence is perpetrated by the police themselves.

3.1.3 Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment in schools and in the workplace is also something that we know has been increasing, but, here too, no one files charges. Sexual harassment is "hushed up" by the victims in order to hold onto their jobs, win a promotion, or even in exchange for a favor, such as a pay raise.

In the informal economy, women are often the victims of sexual harassment, and there they keep quiet in order to ensure their physical safety, to protect their property, and so as not to jeopardize the success of their businesses.

Women need to be educated on the issue of sexual harassment.

3.1.4 Violence in the Workplace

Violence is felt in the workplace, even in positions of responsibility; it may not be visible, but it exists.

Women are usually considered incapable, or unsuited because of family responsibilities to hold these positions. Very often, employers, both government and private, refuse to hire women, on the grounds that they are absent a lot and frequently become pregnant. These attitudes are neither challenged nor punished, because the women themselves do not report them to those who have the duty to do so. Or perhaps it is because there is no "gender" culture in the government or in the National Assembly.

3.1.5 Violence during the War

During the armed conflict, women in Angola were the victims of violence, not only in terms of the war itself, but in particular, they were:

- raped by soldiers (a lot of children were born as a result of these)
- forced to do manual labor (transporting war materiél, food, performing domestic services, or even farm work)

- identified as "witches" and then burned at the stake
- used as "couriers."

But under wartime conditions, men were also victimized by violence.

3.2 The Work of the Legal Advice Centers

The Organization of Angolan Women (OMA) has as its fundamental purpose the campaign to promote women and develop their potential.

In order to carry this campaign forward, ever since independence the OMA has been pressuring the government and the MPLA [Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola], the party in power, to put into practice the "principle of women's right to equality" Many of the changes in our laws are the result of OMA pressure—for example, the Family Code and several provisions of the Labor Code that protect women.

The battle for equal rights led to the creation, in 1986, of Legal Advice Centers that offer the following kinds of services:

- Advice to women and men who are victims of abuse;
- Advice about sexual abuse and rapes;
- Support in dealings with the police, the National Bureau of Criminal Investigation, and the courts;
- Educational efforts on issues of equality between men and women;
- Seminars in training on the causes and effects of violence, and on the principal rules and standards related to human rights.

The cases brought to the Center are handled carefully. An attempt is made to discover the motives, both parties are given a hearing, and whenever possible they try to solve the problem through dialogue before resorting to the courts.

The Legal Advice Centers provide a service that:

- is confidential
- is non-judgmental
- insists on integrity and a firm approach
- seeks to boost the confidence and self-esteem of the victims

Now there are three legal advice centers—in the provinces of Luanda, Benguela, and Cabinda. The number of cases brought to the centers does not represent the true situation because violence is believed to be a private matter. Only the very desperate come to the center. Most victims keep silent because:

1. They are ashamed to file a complaint;
2. They are afraid they will be misunderstood;
3. They are afraid they will continue to be mistreated;
4. They are afraid of losing custody of their children;
5. The do not believe that government agencies can actually do anything;
6. They are unaware of their rights and duties in the eyes of the Law;
7. They are unaware of the available means of protection;
8. They blame themselves.

This is why the data we have does not convey the true dimensions of this situation.

Most violence against women occurs within four walls, and is often abetted and concealed by the victim's own family.

The most frequent cases involve:

1. Beating, physical assault;
2. Moral turpitude;
3. Threats with firearms or knives;
4. Mediation of disputes regarding dwelling units;
5. Mediation of disputes regarding parental rights;
6. Mediation of disputes regarding alimony and child support;
7. Sexual violence, sexual harassment;
8. Murder/suicide.

Above all, we must take violence against women out of the private realm and make it a matter of public responsibility.

We must also enact legislation to punish, prevent, and eliminate all kinds of violence—whether physical, sexual, or emotional—and to severely punish acts of violence.

3.3 Women as Mothers and Workers

There is a contradiction in Angola regarding the role of women, since formal law seems to apply only in urban regions, where it is still poorly understood. In rural areas, family and workplace relationships are governed by the traditional laws that, in general, discriminate against women.

From the theoretical standpoint, the Constitution guarantees the right to equality in the workplace.

The General Labor Code protects women, as well as working mothers, whether married or not. It establishes a right to maternity leave, and awards one day off per month to take care of a child. It guarantees the right to vocational training.

Although from the theoretical standpoint, the rights of working women are guaranteed, in practice they are continually violated and no mechanisms yet exist to monitor and defend those rights.

The socioeconomic changes that occurred in the late 1980s and the early 1990s have caused a high rate of unemployment among women, for the following reasons:

- Some state-owned companies have shut down or been privatized
- Worker selection processes (women have been let go because they lacked compatible professional qualifications)
- Reduction in the number of jobs in the Angolan economy.

In order to overcome this situation, women have moved into the informal economy. The number of female vendors in markets has increased. The number of small, informal, businesses such as snack bars, beauty shops, day care centers, boarding houses, and restaurants has increased, as have the number of women working as domestic servants.

- Women in rural areas are responsible for half the food production
- Because of the high cost of living, and the inflation rate, women usually hold two jobs: a formal job, after which they "moonlight" in odd jobs to boost family income. All this is in addition to housework, which is not counted. This means that women often work 15 to 17 hours a day.

CHAPTER IV

4. Women's Place in Political and Public Life

As to political rights and rights to association, the law does not discriminate among citizens. Sex discrimination is not mentioned.

The Elections Law (Law 5 of April 16, 1992) provides in Article 10 that every Angolan citizen who has reached the age of 18 may vote, and compete for elected office, and Article 5 provides that this vote is personal, secret, and inalienable.

With respect to the exercise of the right of association, the law provides that equality among members is one of the principles that governs the functioning of associations (Law No. 14 of May 11, 1991, Article 10).

The law does not discriminate in terms of sex regarding pay scales, either for ordinary workers or members of the government. It also draws no distinction between the holding of public or private office.

At present, the Executive Branch is composed of 87 members, 75 of whom are men. The National Assembly is composed of 220 deputies, 190 of whom are men. Of the 66 members of the Judiciary Branch, 53 are men and only 13 are women.

4.1 Equality in Terms of the Right to Vote

The most recent revision of the Constitution, Law No. 23 of 1992, guarantees all citizens "political rights without discrimination."

The Elections Law (Law No. 5 of April 16, 1992) recognizes every citizen's equal right to vote or to be elected to office.

The signing of the peace agreement in Portugal in 1991 was one of the most important occasions in the history of this country, especially for women, because they had suffered disproportionately during the armed conflict.

But even at that point, the voices of women were not heard, nor did women serve on any of the negotiating or implementation committees.

During the campaign for the first elections (September 1992), women demonstrated their firm trust in the peace, once again showed their ability to mobilize, and played an active role in the distribution of campaign literature, in civic education, in voter registration, and in getting out the vote. They worked at the polling stations and, on election day, many anonymous women contributed their efforts to supply food and water to help ensure the success of the elections.

During these first elections, the percentage of women voting was unsatisfactory, since the slates offered by most parties did not bother to include women on their lists of candidates for the federal legislature. Only one party nominated a women for the office of president.

Although it is not openly admitted, sex discrimination is certainly felt in practice.

4.2 The Right to Join an Association

The present situation in Angola has permitted the formation, under Law No. 14 of May 11, 1991, of new political parties, as well as new non-governmental and non-political associations devoted to social, occupational, cultural, recreational, or mutual support purposes.

Professional, cultural, recreational and social associations (nurses, jurists, journalists, architects, physicians, etc.) have been established.

Women are playing an important role in several of these associations and many hold positions of responsibility. Some associations are even headed by women.

4.3 The Presence of Women in Congress

The number of women serving in the National Assembly has declined since 1992. Notwithstanding the equality sanctioned by the Constitution, figures show that the percentage of women among the deputies in the Congress at the central government level fell from 14.5% to 9.5%.

In 1996, 20 % of the members of the Executive Branch of the government were women, the highest percentage since independence. Of the 11 political parties that have seats in Congress, only one is headed by a woman; she was a candidate in the presidential elections and holds a deputy's seat, thus introducing a new element to the political scene and calling attention to the urgency of getting women more intensively involved in politics.

4.4 Women's Place in Government Service

The political right:

we find no discrimination against women in the legislation.

Women and the right to work:

Angolan laws on employment and the provision of services in public administration has undergone a thorough rewriting and modernization. The General Labor Code (Law No. 6 of 1981) and complementary legislation is about to be replaced by the new labor code, the proposal for which is now in the final stages of presentation to the National Assembly.

The various laws pertaining to public administration, such as Law No. 17 of 1990, which defines general principles; Decree No. 22 of 1991, on recruitment and selection of candidates; and Decree No. 24 of 1991, on career ladders and entry standards, do not make any mention of the sex of the administrative agents and public employees.

In all the legal measures mentioned above, there is no discrimination against women. Equality in the right to work was expressly recognized in Article 46 of the Constitution, which states that "all citizens have the right and the duty to work."

The rates of participation in decision-making, both political and economic, are very low. The absence of women from the decision-making process on issues of peace, disarmament, and national reconciliation is a fact, and the indicators reflect a downward trend.

4.5 Women's Place in Traditional Authority Structures

The Bantu woman occupies a specific and honored position in society because of her ability to reproduce. The woman who is mother/farmer/donor of the blood line enjoys a certain social position.

Because she is a mother above all, she occupies first place in the family. Her role as wife embodies a significance that is somewhat oriented more toward the exotic and sexual. But one must remember that the way a woman is treated is one thing, her legal status is something else again. And her opportunities for public activity are yet another matter, while the category and measure of her labors belong in another distinct category.

Many women hold important public office, and African history records them as heroines. In the black tradition there are vestiges of a certain degree of female dominance, although one cannot necessarily speak of a gynecocracy.

In Angola, as in other Bantu countries, there are females among the traditional chiefs, evidence of the recognition of their role in society and their contributions to the battle for emancipation and territorial integrity, as well as the struggle against colonialism. Some of the more prominent names include Sobas Maholo and Muangala, and Queens Nekoto, Hanyanka, Ginga, Nhakatolo, and others.

4.6 Women's Place in the Private Sector

The legislation that regulates the economy, especially the laws that establish the rules for business activities, are directed at economic agents who are not differentiated by sex, but by size and nationality. The question of access to those activities

is, then, discussed in terms of finding out whether one can enter a certain activity, and under what conditions—as state-owned or private company, foreign or domestic, large or medium-sized enterprises.

And so, under the economic laws now in effect, which we can consider as being the heart of the regulation of our economy, we find no discrimination at all against women.

Businesswomen are found mainly in family-owned companies, or working for themselves. It is appropriate to begin by stating that the Constitution, in Article 11(3), states: "The State encourages the development of private, mixed, cooperative, and family enterprise and activity and creates the conditions that permit them to function. It especially supports small- and medium-scale economic activities, pursuant to law."

The figures concerning the distribution of the economically active population, arranged by business sector, also show that women constitute the majority of the persons working in retail and wholesale trade, restaurants, and hotels (76.8 % women).

Statistics on the "employer" group indicate that women occupy the position of "boss" predominantely in the retail trade (1,238), social and personal communal services (228), and agriculture and fishery (135). With respect to the occupational status of women in Luanda, the self-employed represented 10.6 of the employed population in 1993, and this group was composed mainly of women (79%). The activities pursued on one's own, or in some way other than salaried employment at formal public and private institutions, tended to be concentrated in the retail and wholesale trade (73.3%), with agriculture and fishery at only 24%. The few studies made about women in business focused on the informal economy, with retail trade being a predominately female business activity in Angola.

CHAPTER V

5. International Representation

5.1 Representation within the United Nations System and in Foreign Missions

In this chapter, we are supposed to discuss the problem of Angolans in general, and Angolan women in particular, who are working in non-Angolan institutions, especially international organizations such as the WHO, UNESCO, UNICEF, the UNDP, UNIDO, the ILO, and many others.

According to information furnished by the head of human resources at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, there are very few Angolans working in those organizations. That is why the United Nations sent a team to Angola to administer tests designed to recruit personnel to work at international organizations.

The absence of an office within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that could compile statistical data on this area of the work force has made it very difficult to collect figures.

Due to the lack of available data on the representation of Angolan women in foreign missions, we cannot report on this aspect. Some cases have been mentioned, but they were not of statistical quality.

It is recommended that work be done to consolidate statistical data, by sex, on employment in foreign missions so that the next report will achieve the expected goals in this area.

5.2 Representation in Diplomatic Missions

As for representation of women in diplomatic missions, figures obtained from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' human resources department indicated that 298 people are working in this country's diplomatic missions. Of these, 94, or 32% are women and 204, or 68%, are men.

Overseas, women are represented in the following manner: one woman ambassador (to Sweden) and four minister-counselors (in New York, Paris, Madrid, and Harare). Angola has four career ambassadors who are women.

Most of the women in diplomatic service hold junior positions, even though the selection process for hiring such personnel is competitive, consisting of an evaluation of credentials, followed by final assessment tests.

5.3 Representation on International Delegations

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs does not have figures on the number of Angolans serving on international delegations at this time. We recommend that a consolidated compilation be made of all the statistics in this area, differentiated by gender, so that in future reports we can give a precise picture of the situation.

CHAPTER VI

6. Education

6.1 Overview, and Constitutional Provisions

When it gained independence in 1975, Angola inherited a formal educational system that was heavily concentrated in the cities (mainly Luanda, Lubango, Benguela, and Huambo). To a large extent, it served primarily those who could afford to pay tuition.

Few Angolan children had access to intermediate or higher education. Given the limited scope of the education system, it is no wonder that the overwhelming majority of Angolan adults (about 85% in the early 1970s) was illiterate.

Broadening the access to education was one of the principal objectives of the new government that took over the reins of power upon independence. A new education policy was adopted in 1977, and it was based on the principle of equality of opportunity. School tuition was abolished, and attendance during the first four years of elementary school was made compulsory. Enrollment tripled and, in 1979, more than 1.9 million children registered. At the same time, the government launched a "battle for literacy" that benefited more than a million adults. In fact, in 1978, Angola won an award for its effort to combat illiteracy.

This effort was not followed up by a more advanced phase, and so the majority lapsed back into illiteracy. Very few women advanced to the higher levels of schooling.

Today, a growing number of Angolan children are unable to exercise their right to an education, owing to an absence of policies to support education, a lack of teacher training policies, poor wage scales, very low funding of education, a shortage of physical facilities, and poor maintenance of existing facilities.

Furthermore, since the early 1980s, as civil war spread throughout the country, it became impossible to sustain the efforts to improve access and equity. Hundreds of schools in rural areas were closed, and heavy financial pressures were put on the central government budget because of high levels of military outlays.

The priority which ought in practice to have been given to education has an economic value, because a country cannot modernize unless a minimum level of education and knowledge is generally prevalent among its people. Education is also a political priority, because any true democracy requires a large contingent of people that have been educated in a more intelligent manner than so far has occurred. The profound political changes that occurred in 1990 on the African continent and in Angola reinforce this thesis: the first duty of a democratic power that is concerned with everyone's fate must be to universalize and improve education which, like "our daily bread," is "first among the needs of a people."

The Government of National Unity and Reconciliation should have increased ability to take action in this field. According to the Ministry of Finance, the trend in education spending as a percentage of the central government budget, has looked like this for the past five years: 1992 - 9.5%; 1993 - 6.8%; 1994 - 4.8%; 1995 - 8.3%; and 1996 - 5.7%. When seen as a percentage of GDP for the same period, the figures are as follows: 1992 - 3.7%; 1993 - 3.7%; 1994 - 1.7%; 1995 - 2.35%; and 1996 - 2.4%.

When compared with some countries of Sub-Saharan Africa, the portion of government spending allocated to education is as follows (1995 figures): Madagascar, 17.2%; Kenya, 18.8%; Ghana, 22%; Lesotho, 21.9%; Angola, 6.8%; Cameroon, 18%; Namibia, 22.6%; Botswana, 20.4%, and Mauritius, 15%. (Sources: MINFIN 1994 for Angola, World Bank 1995 for other countries).

Access to education by every Angolan citizen, without distinction, is guaranteed by the Constitution. However, a study by the Ministry of Education found that girls still prefer to study subjects related to industrial chemistry, economics, law, health, and education rather than electronics and machinery, for example. This study also shows that, in first grade, more girls are enrolled than boys.

Angolan society is developing in the direction of non-segregation in the realm of proportions between men and women, despite the persistence of certain vestiges of prejudice, the fruit of primitive traditions that have no relevance in the modern world.

As for the female presence in higher education, data from the National Institute for Study Grants (INABE) indicate that about 4,000 Angolans are now studying abroad on grants; 75% of them are men, and 25% are women. This highlights a big difference: only a quarter of the grantees are female.

At the Agostinho Neto University, the only institution of higher learning now functioning in Angola, the enrollment is 53% female and 47% male. There are 650 people on the faculty, and the university has 600 technical and administrative personnel, but no distribution by sex is available for either group.

It is recommended that both INABE and the Agostinho Neto University conduct a study of current students by sex and occupational category, and do the same for their alumni, so that this information will be available for future reports.

Using the Constitution as a basis, it is possible to extract from current laws a list of decrees pertaining to women, proving that the guidance given in the law is favorable to that gender. The principle of equality has been recognized ever since our first Constitution, and it has been retained, along with the principle of non-discrimination, through the various revisions of that document. In establishing the criteria for punishment of violations of this tenet, the Constitution provides that "all citizens are equal before the Law and enjoy the same rights and are subject to the same duties, without distinction as to color, race, ethnic background, sex, place of birth, religion, ideology, **level of education**, or economic or social condition."

No citizen may be prejudiced in his employment, **education**, his placement, his occupational career or in the social benefits to which he is entitled, due to his holding of political office or the exercise of political rights.

Under our Constitution, all citizens are assured the right to work and the opportunity to freely choose and practice their **professions.**

The big problem lies in the practical aspects, given the weakness of the judiciary in our country. This means that the mechanisms to execute and monitor what the laws provide have not yet become a reality.

With respect to political life, we are far from achieving a balance between the male and female populations.

6.2 Elementary Education

Although data on the extent of illiteracy are limited, the scale of the problem can be inferred from the average level of schooling to which Angolans have access. The Survey of Multiple Indicators reports that 32.4 % of adults over the age of 19 have never attended school.

The same survey found that 43.5% of women have attended school, compared with 17.9% of men. In the cities, 18.7% of adults have never been to school, while in rural areas, the figure is 41.1%.

In addition to the 32.4% of adults who have never attended school, there is another 39.7% who have never gone beyond fourth grade. In short, almost three-fourths of Angola's adults either have simply never attended school or did not remain in school long enough to attain the level at which permanent literacy is usually assured. Four years of elementary education are not enough to fix knowledge firmly in the pupils' minds, especially under the conditions prevailing in Angolan schools in recent years, which have hardly been conducive to learning.

Before proceeding with an analysis of the problems associated with access to elementary education, perhaps it would be useful to describe the official structure of the formal education system, introduced during the 1977 reforms:

This structure includes the following levels:

- One year of initial preparation
- Eight grades of elementary education, subdivided into Level I (grades 1 to 4), Level II (grades 5 and 6), and Level III (grades 7 and 8)
- Four years of intermediate education (grades 9 through 12) and encompassing technical education and teacher training
- Three years of pre-university education, as an alternative to "intermediate education"
- Higher education (colleges and universities).

The government is considering changes in the educational structure; it would begin with six years of elementary instruction, followed by three years of junior-level secondary education and three or four years of senior-level secondary education. At present, the schools operate on the system introduced in 1977.

In general, only 49.9% of all children between the ages of 5 and 18 were attending school in 1996 (INE/MICS, 1997) [National Institute of Statistics, Ministry of Social Communication].

After the preparatory year, school enrollment in Angola assumes the shape of a pyramid. Although large number of children never attend first grade, the base of this pyramid is broad compared with the tip, owing to the high dropout levels at all levels of the system. Consequently, the number of pupils in school declines sharply from one grade to the next. We do not at present have figures on female dropouts, and no information on their reasons for leaving school.

According to figures from the Ministry of Education concerning enrollment in the 1994/95 academic year, 83.4% of elementary students were enrolled in Level I; 11.3% in Level II, and 5.3% in Level III (NUMED, 1996). The data supplied by the Survey of Multiple Indicators reveal an even greater concentration at Level I (87.2% of elementary students), with only 8.8% at Level II and 4.2% at Level III. (The figures from the Survey of Multiple Indicators also include rural areas controlled by UNITA - the Union for the Total Independence of Angola).

6.2.1 Disparities Between Sexes and Regions

Both the official figures on education and those gathered during the MICS survey, confirm persistent disparities between the sexes in access to education. The girls are at a relative disadvantage, but this trend is much less pronounced now than in the past, and already less marked than in most of Sub-Saharan Africa. The inequalities of the past in terms of opportunities for education between the sexes is quite evident: many more women than men (age 19 or older) have never attended school (55.9%) and only 17.6% of women have gone beyond fourth grade, compared with 38.3% of men.

However, the balance between boys and girls has improved significantly. Estimates based on partial data on enrollment for the 1990/91 academic year show that girls represented 40% of Level I students, 44% of Level II students, and 40% of Level III (UNESCO/UNICEF/NUMED, 1993). By 1994/95, these proportions had risen to 48%, 49.6% and 48.5% respectively, according to data by sex on students who completed the school year in nine of this country's provinces (NUMED, 1996). (The nine [sic] provinces are: Bengo, Huíla, Kuando Kubango, Kuanza Norte, Luanda, Lunda Sul, Malange, and Moxico). The proportion referring to girls may have been slightly overstated because of the inclusion of Luanda among these nine provinces. Luanda not only accounts for an enormous portion of all students matriculated in elementary school in these nine provinces (62%); it is also the only province where the number of girls (50.1% of total enrollment) exceeds the number of boys.

However, the MICS confirms the evidence of a significant improvement in the balance between sexes among students entering school. Taking the three levels of elementary school together, the overall number of girls enrolled is in fact slightly higher, as recorded by the MICS survey (49.1%) than in the figures from the Ministry of Education (48.2%). On the other hand, the MICS cites a slightly higher dropout rate between girls and boys when compared with the data from the Ministry of Education, and this means that the number of girls enrolled declines from 49.3% in Level I to 47.3% in Level II and 46.5% in Level III.

The percentage by sex calculated in the MICS survey compares favorably with the average for Sub-Saharan Africa; regionally, girls represent 45.6% of enrollment in the first six grades of elementary education. In interpreting these figures, it is important to keep in mind that girls slightly outnumber boys in the population as a whole, because of the higher mortality rate among boys.

This means that there really is a greater discrepancy between the sexes than what the numbers might lead one to believe. A better evaluation is obtained by considering the percentage of boys and girls in school. According to MICS figures, 46.8% of girls between the ages of 5 and 18 were attending school in 1996, compared to 53.3% of boys in that same age group.

Similarly, the percentage of enrollments for the first six years of elementary education is lower for girls than for boys (80.1% compared to 95.9% of gross matriculations, and 48.1% compared with 51.9% of net matriculations).

At any rate, although these percentages of matriculations are much poorer than the respective averages for Sub-Saharan Africa, the disparities between sexes are significantly smaller (Angola, 1996--girls 49.1% and boys 50.9%; Sub-Saharan Africa, 1995--girls 45.6% and boys 54.4%).

The disparity between sexes is more serious in some of Angola's interior provinces, particularly in comparison with Luanda. In the nine provinces for which the Ministry of Education has figures on enrollments by sex (for 1994/95), in only two provinces did girls represent less than 40% of the students enrolled in elementary school: Kuando Kubango (39.5%) and Kuanza Norte (37.6%).

6.3 Literacy Programs

The current situation is alarming. Adult illiteracy is on the rise again, and stands well above the rates prevailing in most of the other African countries. It is especially high among women. Estimates of illiteracy rates among persons age 15 and older, in Angola and in Sub-Saharan Africa, are as follows:

- Angola, 1990--men (53%), women (32%);
- Angola, 1995-- men (50%), women (30%);
- Sub-Saharan Africa,1990-- men (62%), women (41%);
- Sub-Saharan Africa, 1995-- men (67%), women (47%).

(Source: UNDP/UNESCO/WORLD BANK, 1996)

Less than half the children between the ages of 5 and 18 attend school, and although there is only a slight disparity between boys and girls in terms of enrollment, children in the interior provinces have fewer opportunities to attend school than those who live in the more developed provinces in the coastal zone. There are shocking disparities in terms of access to schooling between the cities and the rural areas, the latter having been more severely affected by the war.

In general, about 1.29 million adults were enrolled in the literacy campaigns launched between 1976 and 1992. However, the number of adults per year served by these campaigns declined sharply, i.e., from a peak of more than 190,000 in 1980, to fewer than 30,000 annually in the early 1990s (UNESCO/UNICEF/NUMED, 1993).

Shortly thereafter, the literacy program came to a nearly complete halt late in 1992, partly because of the resumption of the war, which hampered access to rural areas. Other factors in the collapse of this program were the decline in appropriated funds, the shortage of skilled personnel, and the delay in adopting and implementing a new literacy strategy that would bring a more functional approach to methodology and content (de-politicizing the program so as to adapt it to the multiparty system introduced in Angola in 1991).

Many of the adults enrolled during the campaigns, especially in rural areas, were disadvantaged by the fact that the courses were almost always conducted in Portuguese. Late in the 1980s, some of the national languages had been used in the literacy campaigns on an experimental basis, but the experiment was terminated prematurely for lack of political will. Not only has the literacy program been suspended for all practical purposes since 1993, but there has been no follow-up to consolidate the experiences of the adults who benefited from the campaigns in prior years.

The Ministry of Education estimates that about 70% of the newly-literate adults have relapsed into illiteracy (NUMED, 1997). Meanwhile, large numbers of children have reached adulthood, yet are illiterate or semi-literate because of circumstances at home and the failures of the elementary education system. Many children either left school before they had fully mastered literacy skills because of the poor learning conditions in the schools, and the high dropout rates between grades, or they simply never enrolled.

The high illiteracy rate is one of the most serious challenges that Angola faces. Being able to read and write, along with some basic education, is the foundation for acquiring more knowledge. It expands an individual's opportunity to obtain training, jobs, and better pay. At the national level, an illiterate--and therefore unskilled--labor force either prevents or greatly slows the economic development process.

The fact that in Angola such a vast proportion of the adult female population is illiterate has particularly serious implications for the welfare of women and their children. There is an old saying that goes: "When you educate a man, you educate an individual; when you educate a women, you educate a nation."

Illiteracy is a key barrier to increasing earnings from farming and informal commerce, the two sectors that employ most women, and it also diminishes the funds available for their children. Female illiteracy seriously restricts the scope of education of children within the family, just as it limits access to vital knowledge about reproductive health, nutrition, clean water, sanitation, and the environment, resulting in improper practices that rank among the major causes of mortality, including the high rates of maternal, child, and infant mortality.

With respect to functional literacy, in Mali in 1970, R. Dumont and B. Dumont were able to identify outstanding results attained by a functional literacy program conducted in the vernacular that merits further discussion here.

The program was dubbed "functional" because the texts used to teach people to read benefited the students in the occupation they were already pursuing or about to pursue. Within 12 weeks, a young adult could learn to read, write, and count. During the same time period, the best students were able to become literacy tutors, in contrast to the long and arduous years required to train an elementary school teacher—who is not always willing to go out and start teaching in the jungle, "far from everything." The newly-literate person, on returning to his or her village to teach, if the village had paid for the literacy course, is content to accept a fairly modest compensation. "I saw some," said Dumont (1991, p. 162), "who were happy just to ask their students to till their fields for them."

As a consequence of the inadequacies of the school system and the literacy programs, most of the Angola's rural population has been deprived of what one might consider as being the first among the rights of man in general, and especially of women: the right to dignity, which a minimum of instruction confers on any human being. This situation contributes, to a large extent, to the course of economic processes in our country, but also to the political failures. Democracy will have a hard time establishing and maintaining itself in a country where most of the population is illiterate.

6.4 School Dropout and Early Pregnancy Rates among Girls

At this time no scientific studies have been conducted at the national level that would determine the dropout rates by sex at all levels of instruction. However, some studies were made in the provinces of Huíla, Moxico, and Cabinda during the 1993/94 school year by the INE in collaboration with UNICEF-ANGOLA, at Levels I, II, and III,, as well as in intermediate education.

Dropout rates among the male and female school population did not exhibit many differences. In Huíla Province, the dropout rates were as follows: Level I - males 19.6%, and females 19.1%; Level II - males 26.5% and females 27.5%; Level III - males 17.2% and females 13.8%; Intermediate school - males 12.8% and females 9.5%. Note that the dropout rates do not decline as academic objectives evolve within the system.

In Moxico Province, figures for 1994 show the following: Level I, dropout rate for males: 24.6%, for females: 12.6%; Level II, dropout rate for males: 41%, for females: 40.3%; Level III, dropout rate for males: 43.4%, compared with 28.7% for females.

In Cabinda, the school dropout rates were as follows:

Level I, 13.3% for males compared with 13.7% for females; Level II, 10.1% for males compared with 11.7% for females; Level III, 26.2% for males compared with 16.1% for females. In intermediate school, the dropout rate for males was 10.6% compared with 13.9% for females.

In Luanda Province, one study indicates that because of early pregnancy and premature marriage, 8.1% of the female population that has attended school eventually drops out. This figure was 1.8% in Malange and 4.2% in Huíla.

In general, it has been found that as the academic objectives evolve within the educational and instructional system, the number of girls attending declines. The reasons for this are usually cultural, economic, and social. Girls may marry very early, parents may give priority to boys in terms of schooling, and some parents believe that it is almost futile to invest in the education of a girl, because another family will reap the benefits.

6.5 Women's Place in National Education

For various reasons, it has not been possible to collect data on the number of women employed in education in comparison to the number of men. The Planning Department of the Ministry of Education is not able to supply the requested figures, but a study on gender is now under way.

Therefore, it is recommended that data be gathered and compiled on the teaching profession, by sex and by category, as well as on non-teachers by sex and category, for use in future reports.

6.6 Ratio Between the Sexes in Student Organizations

It was impossible to obtain figures on this subject because statistical data at the national level are non-existent. We recommend that data be compiled at the national level on the relative capability [sic] between the sexes, so that it can be used in future reports.

CHAPTER VII

7. Employment

Angola is now undergoing a transition from a single-party state to one that is democratic and governed by law. Access to employment at all levels of the population is one of the basic rights that the country has to offer. Although no disparities between the sexes with respect to employment are found in laws and other legal measures, one sees in Angola a widespread trend in job opportunities. Although women are beginning to achieve the same level of responsibilities as men, the great majority of them are steered into precarious jobs, especially jobs in the informal economy.

One of the principal reasons for the poor quality of jobs held by women is the low, or non-existent, level of schooling. The informal market is the chief catchall for illiterate or poorly-educated women. The labor market in Angola is characterized by a strong informal sector that is dominated by women. With about 58% of its population (53% of whom are women) living in rural areas, this country is essentially rural and, until independence, depended on the rural economy for its livelihood. Political changes and the war caused the Angolan people to change their habits. Now, besides the petroleum and diamonds that are its two greatest sources of wealth at the moment, the Angolan people make their living from informal commerce.

Informal employment accounts for about 10% of the principal sources of employment for heads of households, 40% of whom are women.

The 58% of the population who live in rural areas, especially the 53% who are female, have been neglected. They are the orphans of development. Farming, once the primary source of income and employment, has experienced capital flight, and the arable land area has been reduced by the presence of mines and other explosive devices. Furthermore, few policies have been implemented to support farmers, and the network of roads and other communications has been destroyed.

At present, the shortage of urban jobs and sources of income, particularly for women, is emerging as a fuse that could ignite social unrest and increase the social differences between the sexes. The low purchasing power of wages to some extent affects housing; access to employment is a major factor in household income.

To escape this situation, Angolan women need to increase their social, economic, and cultural skills and, especially, their level of education. As is true in many countries, relations between the sexes in Angola are characterized by women's inequality vis à vis men. These relationships have to do with opportunities and differences in education, customs, and legal aspects. These factors can be overcome if women come to understand that they play a certain role in society and that they can reach their potential in terms of supporting themselves, exercising control over their own lives and, in fact, beginning to be entitled to hold more significant and better-paying jobs.

7.1 The Economically Active Female Population

Discussing the topic of the economically active female population compels us to refer to the problem of the economically active population (EAP) as a whole. If we consider the EAP as those in the 15-60 age bracket (the customary definition for the formal sector of the economy), then it represents about 47% of Angola's total population. However, both the results of the various surveys conducted in Angola and what we know from practical experience and observation in the field indicate that children as young as 10 years old are already economically active, which means that the EAP corresponds to 61% of total population.

For girls and women, and taking into account this latter age bracket (ages 10-60), the economically active female population would represent about 63% of the total Angolan female population and about 55% of the total population of Angola. Remember that the EAP is the population of working age, thus reflecting the active population, i.e., the population of working age that is actually working, looking for work, or has looked for work in the seven days prior to the date of the survey.

Owing to a lack of indicators concerning the percentage of population that is active in recent years, we will refer to the numbers reflected by the survey of households done by the National Institute of Statistics (INE) in 1995. That survey found an overall rate of participation of 38% in five of the major Angolan cities (Luanda, Cabinda, Benguela, Moxico, and

Huíla), and 35% in Luanda. The overall rate of female participation in these cities is 45%, ten percentage points below the rate for males, which is 55%.

7.2 Employment in Urban Areas by Age, and Organizations in the Rural Areas

Employment in urban areas is characterized by the appearance of mere formal and informal enterprises. For both sexes, the tendency is to supplement one's formal employment, in this case, government service. As regards age, participation is more differentiated. The youngest members of both sexes are engaged mainly in informal commerce, selling a little bit of everything. Young women tend to sell food (fruit, food products) and focus more on informal gathering-places or areas near their residences.

For the older group, young and old adults, micro-enterprises have become the strategy most commonly employed to alleviate the poverty that is almost universal among city dwellers, and this is more pronounced among women and girls because of the low educational level.

A survey conducted by the National Institute of Statistics in Kuanza Sul Province, a rural area (where more than half the population is female), found that almost 70% of its residents were working in agriculture, while about 11% were engaged in fishing. Although we would not want to extrapolate the results for Kuanza Sul to the entire country, we note that the rural female population, given the difficulties of various sorts experienced in the agricultural sector, pursue these activities as a way of improving their diets, or, in other words, as subsistence activities.

Both female and male residents of rural areas are held captive by the low farm productivity that restricts their income-earning ability. Small-scale production, using low levels of technology—these and other factors have contributed to low farm productivity.

With the nationalization of agricultural businesses that occurred in the more or less recent past, and the grouping of rural workers into cooperatives, production capacity was reduced, as was, in particular, the commercial exchange function performed by rural markets, that had been encouraged in the past by the modern farm business community.

7.3 Employment/Occupation by Socioeconomic Group

We will use the classification into socioeconomic groups adopted by the National Institute of Statistics during its 1995 survey of households, in which the population was analyzed as being part of the

- Public administration
- State-owned companies
- Formal private sector
- Informal private sector

An analysis of gender in employment by socioeconomic groups shows an influx of women into government employment, where they represent 51% of the work force (1995 figures). In other socioeconomic groups, equilibrium is obvious. However, it should be stressed that most women in the groups mentioned above are in working in informal private enterprises (about 21%), and in poorly-defined activities (about 31%) of total women.

7.4 Employment/Occupation and Level of Education

One of the biggest problems women find in gaining access to decent, well-paying jobs is their low, or non-existent, level of schooling. Figures from 1996 indicate that 44% of women age 19 or older have had no schooling, and 23% are completely illiterate.

The labor market is characterized by a large number of unattractive, low-paying jobs that make only a paltry contribution to the total household income.

An analysis of the data on women's occupations and level of education shows that 65% of female merchants have had no schooling at all, followed by unpaid family-member workers at 12%, and the informal sector at 6%.

For those who have some educational experience, elementary school (grades 1 to 4) is important among farm workers, about 53%. Merchants account for most of the group that has attended Level II or Level II, about 62%.

The differentials in educational level between the sexes and the high levels of illiteracy among women, could explain the degree of segmentation in the informal labor market.

7.5 Profile of Unemployment

Unemployment is an important variable in the [unintelligible] exhibited by the labor market, since it reflects the differences between supply and demand for labor. The gross rate of unemployment for Luanda Province, the only reference available at present, was estimated at 32.3%.

A comparison of the formal and informal business sectors shows significant increases for the latter sector, as shown in the table that appears later in this chapter.

With respect to women--again referring to figures for Luanda Province--the unemployment rate has reached 35.6%, 7% higher than the rate for men. As does the general trend, the profile of the unemployment rate among women exhibits innumerable differences between age groups; for example, the 10-29 age bracket shows the highest numbers. The serious shortage of women in the educational system is one of the leading causes of the economic inactivity of the young female population, a factor in the precarious situation of poverty experienced by many families.

7.5.1 Table: Unemployment Rates by Sex and Age

	AGE BRACKETS				
SEX	10 to 19	20-29	30-39	50+	TOTAL
MALE	72.4	26.6	8.4	14.4	28.5
FEMALE	70.9	30.3	20.3	29.4	35.6
TOTAL	71.6	28.7	14.2	20.8	

In all age groups, women have higher unemployment rates than men. These figures are heavily influenced by the fact that women are, for the most part, the "engines" of household work.

To complete our analysis of the profile of unemployment among women, it is important to point out that the absence of sustained growth per capita, owing to low rates of investment and the serious deficiencies in the government and private sector, are some of the causes of the generally poor situation in which women, who represent the majority of Angola's population, find themselves.

7.6 Remuneration: Minimum and Maximum Wages and Salaries

The Constitution of Angola does not permit any kind of discrimination and lays down the general principles of equality of rights and duties for all citizens, regardless of sex, parentage, political affiliation, color, or religion.

The growing tendency for each household or family group to have more than one breadwinner may be a result of the increase in the cost of living associated with a constant decline in the purchasing power of wages and salaries, subject to the brutal effects of high rates of inflation that keeps more people from entering the labor market. The introduction presented in the first paragraph of this subchapter serves to portray an identical situation for both men and women.

In government employment under the general regime, both men and women earn at least KZR* 7,965,000.00, and the maximum salary is KZR 70,685,000.00.

These pay scales are equivalent to about US$20 for the lowest salary, and US$180 for the highest salary, using the official exchange rate of US$100 = KZR 26,800,000.00. Note that on the parallel market, US$100 is equivalent, as of the date of this report, to KZR 43.000,000.00.

For executive positions, the minimum and maximum salaries are KZR 70,755,000.00 and KZR 77,830,500.00 for supervisory positions, and KZR 91,981,500.00 and KZR 160,132,500.00 for managerial positions.

7.7 Constitutional and Legislative Measures

The severe economic difficulties this country has experienced in recent years is seriously reflected in the standard of living of most of the population, especially the most vulnerable groups (children, women, and the elderly). These difficulties are the result of years of warfare, and of socioeconomic systems that are unsuited to certain situations. Recently, structural adjustment programs have to some extent exacerbated the existing difficulties, although though such programs appear to be necessary for future economic and social survival.

The participation by women in high-level decision-making bodies within the present Government of National Unity and Reconciliation; the creation of the Ministry of Family Affairs and Advancement of Women to replace the former Ministry for Advancement of Women; the fact that women head four cabinet ministries (Culture, Petroleum, Fisheries, and Family Affairs) and hold several vice-ministerial posts (two in the Ministry of Planning, two in the Ministry of Education, one in the Ministry of Social Reintegration, one in the Ministry of Postal Affairs and Communications, one in the Ministry of Family Affairs, and one in the Ministry of Health), not to mention the various managerial positions in large, strategically-important state-owned and private enterprises, are some of the factors that lead us to believe that the active role of women in Angolan society is beginning to become more visible.

However, at the local level, one observes an absence of concrete measures in favor of women, including rural women. The wide variety of institutions created are general in scope, which in some ways pushes women into the informal sector because of the discrimination and the unfair competition present in those institutions; however, a contributing factor is that the women involved are inadequately prepared for these jobs.

* Adjusted Kwanzas. Note that salary figures cited were not tied to any time frame (per day, week, month, etc.).

CHAPTER VIII

8. Health

Shortly after independence, private health-care institutions were abolished and replaced by free medical services. Law 9, of 1975, established national health services and set health policy, which placed priority on preventive care and curative care for the most vulnerable sectors of the population, namely, women and children. However, it was not until 1989 that the first operational five-year plan for maternal and child health care was launched.

8.1 Health Policy and Health Care System/Maternal and Child Health

Maternal and child mortality should be one of the priority concerns of health policy and the health care system in Angola. Improving the health of children paves the way for improved health when they reach adulthood.

Improving the health of mothers and their children entails adoption of the following measures:

- Strengthening the services that provide instruction in sanitation and infant care
- Strengthening and increasing the availability of prenatal medical consultations
- Intensifying and improving the training of persons responsible for maternal and child care (including traditional midwives)
- Extension of vaccination campaigns against the principal communicable diseases (measles, tetanus, diphtheria) to cover all the country's children
- Expansion and extension of nutritional programs, including information on breast-feeding and child nutrition
- Nationwide promotion and dissemination of information on oral rehydration therapy
- Integration of services oriented toward family planning, with a view to increasing the birth interval
- Increasing the number of clinics and maternal and child care centers.

8.2 Fertility, and Infant Mortality Rate

The total fertility rate in Angola is one of the highest in the world, which creates serious health problems. Therefore, birth spacing is a strategic element that could help improve the health of the mothers of our children.

In fact, the high rate of clandestine abortions, which is abhorrent to many people's consciences, justifies the promotion of family planning as a means of prior, rational choice of family size. The following actions are advocated for this purpose:

- Strengthening and improving information and communications programs to disseminate knowledge about contraceptive methods and the possibilities in terms of birth spacing
- Strengthening and improving educational programs on population matters, in order to make the public aware of the medical, health, socioeconomic, and social and cultural benefits of family planning
- Launching of periodic campaigns to explain the risks of early pregnancy and the benefits of responsible parenthood.

Angola is considered as the region in the South African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC) that has the highest maternal and child mortality rate.

In December 1990, the Ministry of Health reported that it had found an infant mortality rate of 160 per thousand in the first year of life. A 1986 study revealed that in the city of Luanda, the mortality rate for children in the outskirts of the city was 38% higher than in the more developed urban areas.

Angola also has a disastrous maternal mortality rate. In 1988, the mortality rate recorded at health facilities nationwide was calculated at 665 per hundred thousand, or 6.7%. There is a big difference in maternal mortality rates among provinces.

Maternal and child mortality in Angola is related to the poor general health of its women, caused by poor nutrition, infections, parasitic diseases, and the lack of adequate primary health care, especially in areas adjacent to cities, and rural areas.

8.3 Teen Pregnancy and Family Planning

In 1989, approximately 80% of pregnant women in Luanda sought prenatal care, and 70% of them were vaccinated against tetanus. The prenatal mortality rate for Luanda was 75-80 per thousand, and there were more than 5,000 recorded cases of neonatal tetanus.

Family planning programs in Angola were started in 1986. As of November 1990, there were more than 30 family planning clinics in Angola, and plans had been made to open four more such clinics and six delivery rooms in Luanda Province.

In Luanda, family planning advice is currently provided at two maternity clinics and four health centers. There were plans to raise to 19 the number of health centers providing such consultation by the end of last year.

In 1989, there were 9,122 new cases in Luanda that received counseling, which corresponds to 3% of the city's population profile.

According to 1989 Ministry of Health estimates, 72,400 women in Angola between the ages of 15 and 49 were using contraceptives. This figure corresponds to 3.3% of the total number of women in this age bracket. Luanda has the highest rate of contraceptive use, while five provinces (Kuanza Norte, Lunda Norte, Moxico, Uíge, and Zaire) have a usage rate of less than 1%.

Teen pregnancy is found in all socioeconomic classes. Although it is difficult to obtain statistics on the extent of teen pregnancy, the context in which it occurs is different in the urban and rural areas. In rural areas, it is not unusual for girls of 15 to have children. In many traditional societies, women marry early, and having children before marriage increases the likelihood that they will marry. Teen pregnancy in many cases occurs within the girl's own family.

8.4 Abortion

Abortion is still considered a crime in Angola. Usually this kind of abortion is sought most often by adolescent girls who become pregnant without their parents' knowledge.

Clandestine abortions usually take place in locations that lack even basic hygiene and are often performed by people who do not have even a minimum of training in the procedure. This means that medical problems develop that are difficult to cure, such as infections, genital trauma, perforation of the uterus and intestines and, sometimes, sterility. From January to July 1991, the Augusto Ngangula Maternity Clinic in Luanda recorded 11 cases of death from complications of clandestine abortions. During that same period, the hospital performed 403 authorized abortions and treated 139 patients who had spontaneous abortions, for a total of 553 abortions. Most abortions occurred in cases where continuation of the pregnancy was deemed a threat to the health of the mother. Some abortions were authorized owing to failure of family planning methods, or very short intervals between pregnancies.

8.5 Measures to Improve Health Care Services

The specific objectives of the government's two-year program in the health care field for 1995-96 were to:

1. Increase services coverage in accessible suburban and rural areas;
2. Improve health care service management.

In order to achieve these objectives, the government assigned priority to the following actions:

- Reducing maternal mortality by improving follow-up during pregnancy
- Improving the water and sewer system
- Assisting the physically handicapped
- Reinforcing epidemiological vigilance by establishing regional laboratories and improving the surveillance mechanisms
- Improving the organizational structure and operations of sanitation units
- Improving personnel training and management by adopting a policy of continuous training, until their integration into the national health system, in teaching methods as applied to health subjects and in human resources planning.

CHAPTER IX

9. Economic and Social Life

The socioeconomic status of women in Angola can be described as characterized by a certain imbalance in the sharing of tasks and responsibilities between the sexes. Usually, women find themselves in a situation where they must keep the family afloat without having the same powers and rights as men. Women struggle with the problems of maintaining the education and survival of members of the household; this is due mainly to two factors: on the one hand, the socioeconomic situation in this country, which leads to an "inequitable" distribution of the means of survival within the home and, on the other, male underestimation of women, which means a woman is disdained by the man and marginalized within her own family.

Despite a certain dynamism and energy and other aspects, women as a socioeconomic factor in economic matters related to the informal market, in which they are the great majority, may in the future be compromised. This is because some of the cultural issues in Angolan society have a strong palliative force within the community of the family, whether we are in the rural or the urban areas. The effect of this is a possible decline in certain education indicators among women. The tendency to abandon schooling during elementary school, and the dropout rate among persons over the age of 10 may come to be a truly negative indicator for the future of this country.

The abandonment of education, caused by early—and often unwanted—pregnancies or because in this society girls or boys must do housework and/or care for younger siblings may be associated with the fact that generally, household income is extremely low (61% of households in five major Angolan cities are below the poverty line) and in these cases the head of the household seeks ways to relieve poverty by selecting those members of the household who are to be allowed to attend school. In general, the girls are relegated to the traditional role of housewife.

As in the case of education, the problem of women's health has also been exacerbated by the war. Women's health is extremely fragile, especially in the rural areas, and is characterized by indicators that are of concern to Angolan society: the high fertility rate, (about 6.8 children per woman in the urban areas, 7 children in the rural areas, and 6.9 children nationwide); the high mortality rate among infants and children (about 274 per thousand live births nationwide); low levels of immunization of children, etc.

9.1 Availability of Credit for Women

The problems of economic facility in relation to the real needs of the population (ordinary citizens, businessmen, etc.) is something that significantly impacts Angolan women. Data from the Ministry of Labor (MAPESS) for 1993 indicate the relative participation of women in the various sectors of the economy. And so, in production sectors, we find: industry, 17%; construction, 11%; formal commerce, 25%; and agriculture and fishing, 26%. In the "non-production" sectors: community services, 28%; education and science, about 36%; culture and art, 49%; public administration, 29%; health care services, about 42%. These figures reflect women's growing participation in the economic and social life of this country.

In recent years, women have organized and formed associations on the basis of occupational and economic criteria. The emergence of this kind of feminine organization has played a positive role in projecting and defending the interests of women. The influx of women into the informal sector of the economy, which by definition means they are not registered, have no established place of business, do not pay taxes, and are to some extent persecuted by the authorities, has a negative impact on the possibilities for organizing--opportunities already scarce in terms of training and access to the means of production and to markets.

The problem of bank credit, although widespread throughout Angolan society, falls heaviest on the economic activities of women, who struggle with special difficulties because they often do not have the collateral that lenders require.

9.2 Women and Disability

The transformation of Angola into a free and democratic state has contributed to the rise of an egotistical society. Physical handicaps are readily observable throughout this country. It is hard to draw distinctions between the sexes on this subject,

because both face the very same problems. Angola has no practical legal instrument that would help the handicapped, particularly handicapped girls and women, to protest discrimination against them.

Data from the most recent survey conducted nationwide by the National Institute of Statistics in 1996 shows that about 2.1% of the female population in Angola has some kind of physical handicap. Although high, this rate is lower than the 3.7% found among men.

It is significant that the disability rate among rural women is 2.5%, higher than the 1.7% found for urban women. This is a result of the many years of warfare that this country has suffered.

Because of pressure from organizations devoted to assisting this segment of society, government agencies are beginning to react positively, but not sufficiently so as to meet the need.

9.3 Sports

This area of community life in Angola is perhaps one of those that has suffered the most from the country's precarious economic and financial situation. This is because the central government budget allocates only minimum funding to sports and to youth organizations.

This introductory comment serves to demonstrate that recreational activities in this country depend on the existing conditions. However, the ladies have managed, within this bleak picture, to carve out a little space for themselves on the podium, where they are being congratulated by the entire nation. In handball, basketball, track and field, and swimming, Angolan women have made a name for this country on foreign soil.

Special prominence is given to women's handball where, both at the individual team level and the national all-star levels, Angola has won three African titles and places of distinction at the world level.

However, the circumstances described earlier in this report are like the trees that hide the forest, since the situation is critical. Once the main breeding ground for athletes, the schools are experiencing many problems, particularly the poor condition of their sports facilities. In addition, there are problems in getting girls interested in playing sports.

Because of the dawn of a "society of convenience," the clubs are unable to attract future athletes, and so one can see that active participation in sports has declined in quantity and quality in our country.

9.4 Cultural Life

This section of the report can be said to be the "twin sister" of the sports section. The conditions appear to be the same. The women who are involved in this area struggle to continue with the scant resources they are given. It was a landmark event when the post of Minister of Culture was given to a women, and this should perhaps inspire the others to apply themselves more diligently.

Some of women's most significant appearances are in the area of "show biz," especially music, dance, and the theater. Women of a certain academic background or educational level have shown interest in the cultural life and history of this country. This country has gained prominence from the participation of various intellectuals in preparing a blueprint for the creation of a more civic-minded society in which moral standards have a place.

There may be some concern about the younger generation, which has turned toward other cultures. There is a certain tendency to adopt foreign values. The influence of countries of "easy" access brings with it habits and customs that often have nothing to do with Angolan customs and habits. Under these circumstances, girls are easy prey; the dictates of fashion from surrounding areas have transformed Angolan ways of dress and taken away its unique originality.

Respect for and adoption of the Angolan culture must also be promoted by the schools, and involves increasing the educational level of girls, which, as we have seen, is lower at all levels than for boys. It is urgent that the central government find ways to make our culture more visible, to exploit it and transmit it to other parts of the globe; Angolan women could be the vector of transmission.

CHAPTER X

10. The Rural Woman

To talk about the Angolan countryside without making specific reference to rural women is to suggest that they be omitted from the broad mosaic of the situation that is developing in this country, that encompasses the non-urbanized zones near cities, as well as an important number of ethno-linguistic, cultural and social values that we have mentioned, differences that, therefore, deserve a certain deference.

Throughout Africa, rural women play multiple roles that range from motherhood, child-raising, production of goods and services (supplying or fetching water, food, and energy to be able to process the foods) providing health care for family members (especially the children), to exhausting housework--in short, a myriad of tasks, none of them remunerated. In Angola, these tasks are made more arduous by the difficulties endemic to rural areas, where almost nothing is within the reach of the communities.

The fact that all these tasks we have mentioned are not computed as family income has as a consequence (heightened in part by the lack of education on the part of the male partner) an increase in domestic violence against women in the event of any worsening in the family's economic situation. The conflicts are almost always due to disputes over the distribution of family income to meet the needs of the household.

10.1 The Condition of the Rural Woman

Women in rural communities do not perform only the domestic tasks that are vital to the survival of the family. In Angola, they are an important part of the farm labor force, and that's not all. Rural communities face a number of problems caused by different factors (the war, drought, lack of proper farm tools and/or more modern tools, lack of support, etc.) that cannot be solved merely by the isolated actions of men. It is urgent and necessary that women be chosen to serve on the committees charged with ameliorating the problems.

The organization of women into groups in rural areas could enable the heads of those groups to be treated, as a matter of course, as participants in the projects to be implemented by the community. This approach could make it easier to develop better conditions for rural women, a situation that, at present, is being somewhat neglected.

Since the development of this country is an objective shared by all Angolans and since the Angolan man is, in general, the principal target of that process, we must not forget that, overall, almost 60% of the "Angolan man" consists of women, the same proportion of women who live in rural areas. Therefore, development in Angola must involve the rural areas and must focus primarily on improving conditions for rural women.

10.2 Programs to Benefit Rural Women

As is true of any other segment of Angolan society, the rural community of women cannot develop itself in isolation without the intervention and active participation of the entity that executes state policy, i.e., the government.

The Government of National Unity and Reconciliation, acting through the Ministry of Family Affairs and advancement of Women, has developed a project to assist underprivileged women, especially rural women, who are among those most victimized by the situation of poverty in this country. Some 67% of households in Angola are below the poverty line. The Ministry's project is entitled "Microcredit."

The problem has long been a concern of that Ministry, which in 1992 initiated a far-reaching project to support rural women, an effort that, unfortunately, had to be abandoned with the renewed outbreak of the war after 1992.

After the First Lady of Angola attended the Stockholm Summit, it became urgent to implement a broad program of support to rural women, under the United Nations resolutions aimed at eradicating poverty by the year 2005. This program focuses mainly on the local level and has moved from the humanitarian context to the development context. In it, women themselves can carry out their own activities with the support of the Government—in this case, the Ministry of Family Affairs and Advancement of Women.

In addition to government efforts, there are governmental and non-governmental organizations that support women with development programs that are aimed at fostering opportunities for women to govern themselves and become economically independent, enabling them to obtain and control productive resources, among which are opportunities for education.

The purpose of these programs is to help redistribute resources in favor of women, but to accomplish this it is vital that the women covered by these projects have opportunities to exercise an influence over them.

10.3 Access to Services

Access to housing, water, school, health clinics—these are among the elements necessary to maintain equilibrium in the family and the community. The great majority of rural women, like the other residents of rural areas, live in homes of traditional design, built of local materials (wattle and daub, palm fronds and other leaves, manure, etc.).

In rural areas, water is obtained from rivers, creeks, springs, rainwater/drainpipes. Obviously, because of ingrained habits and a lack of proper instruction, rural women do not treat the water they drink, and most houses in rural areas do not have latrines or bathrooms. Most families take care of their needs outdoors.

Access to school is also very difficult in rural areas. There are many reasons why families do not send their children to school. One of the principal reasons is the distance they would have to travel to school; another is the need for children to help with household tasks.

10.4 Rural Women and Technology

The importance of proven technology to rural women is highlighted by the increase of support to the rural economy. As we have seen in preceding subchapters, women are not engaged solely in domestic tasks. They usually work in the fields, growing the products, while men go out and sell them. In this regard, appropriate technical means must be made available as part of the support of rural women, but taking into account the specific needs in each region, since there are regional differences in how a certain product is grown.

To make the work of rural women more profitable and less exhausting means placing at her disposal a series of preconditions, such as access to technological resources and access to financial resources.

Access to the technical means of increasing productivity requires observing the conditions faced by the rural woman and the poor female peasant. She will need tractors, carts, good plows—in short, reorganizing her farm work will not only solve her problem but it will also contribute to increasing production and productivity and will create more wealth. Therefore, the role of extension workers or facilitators working with communities of rural women in the transmission of experiences and techniques is of great importance.

10.5 Economic Situation and Access to the Means of Production

The economic situation in the rural areas, especially that of rural women, is critical. It exhibits the same trends as the country's overall situation, but is separate from the mainstream. Rural women need all kinds of support and resources for production. The material presented in the preceding subchapters concerning rural women shows the state in which this segment of Angolan society finds itself. The requisite human capital exists, it need only be given the proper attention; efforts must be made to improve living conditions.

In the countryside, as in the city, unequal gender relations deepen poverty and increase dependency among women. Rural poverty weakens the agricultural social milieu and works to diminish the exemplary solidarity that traditionally exists in rural families and communities in Angola. The absence not only of markets but also of manufactured products, is the biggest problem affecting rural women today. Moreover, transportation and communications are the backbone of any economy, whether rural or urban, therefore their role in rural areas is a vital one.

10.6 Government Policy on Agriculture and Rural Development

One of the biggest concerns of the Government of National Unity and Reconciliation must be the rehabilitation of the agricultural sector, and so it must proceed with sets of actions in favor of rural women. In 1994, the government took a series of actions that were intended to put farming back on track.

Attempts were made to develop projects on raising poultry in primitive coops, on seed propagation, and on the establishment of plant nurseries for fruit trees and for production of energy from wood. These projects were described as short-term and medium-term.

Other, long-term, projects have been committed to paper and now await financing from the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MINADER) and international partners.

The deterioration of the political situation in the wake of the first free elections led to the postponement of many of these projects. At present, one of the most advanced projects seems to be the one on "Microcredit," now being implemented in some towns in the provinces of Luanda and Bengo.

Removal of all land mines from Angola would, of course, permit revitalization of the agricultural sector since it will, logically, attract a lot of investment based on the rationale that Angola is a potentially rich country where about 60% of its population is rural, composed in its majority of women, over half of them under the age of 16.

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